

Project Title: Southeast Elk Population Management

Project Location: Unit 3 (3,000 mi²)

All islands west of Unit 1B, north of Unit 2, south of the centerline of Frederick Sound, and east of the centerline of Chatham Strait

Project Objectives and Activities:

- Provide for growth of the transplanted elk herd to 900–1,000 animals.
- Provide for all beneficial uses of elk consistent with sustained yield management when the herd reaches 250 elk.

Work Accomplished During the Project Segment Period: We issued 30 elk drawing permits and 1 public raffle permit for the October hunt. We monitored hunter camps during the first week of the hunting season. Teeth were collected from harvested elk for aging and antlers were photographed. Four of the harvested elk were 2–4 years old, and 5 were 5–9 years old. On March 4 an aerial survey was conducted on Etolin Island to determine if elk were becoming established on the eastside of the island. We observed tracks of about 6 elk where the lake between Bessie Peak and Helen Peaks drains into Zimovia Strait. No other elk or tracks were observed on the eastside. Snow conditions were poor on the southwest side of the island but 11 cows and 1 calf were observed on the beach across from Center Island and an undetermined number of elk tracks were seen in McHenry Inlet.

On April 6–7, ADF&G and Forest Service personnel monitored 54 elk winter range transects on Etolin Island. The transects were previously monitored in 1991 and 1998. Results of the monitoring were similar to 1998, which showed reduced deer pellets and increased elk pellets compared to 1991. Elk use (pellets per plot) doubled, while deer use decreased by more than a third. The majority of the plots still had 1–50% *Vaccinium* cover and did not appear to be heavily impacted by elk, except in some concentrated bedding areas on small hilltops. Two 15' x 15' habitat exclosures were constructed in McHenry Anchorage to monitor forb use by elk and deer.

Progress Meeting Project Objectives: The Unit 3 elk population is currently estimated between 250–300 animals. Twenty permit holders harvested 9 bull elk in 82 days afield, for a 45% success rate.

Segment Period Project Costs:

	<u>Personnel</u>	<u>Operating</u>	<u>Total</u>
Planned	5.6	7.5	13.1
Actual	11.4	3.5	14.9
Difference	5.8	4.0	1.8

More was spent on staff time with the Ketchikan area biologist and the management coordinator assisting with field duties. Less was spent than anticipated on air charter.

Submitted by: Bruce Dinneford
Management Coordinator

Project Title: Southcentral Alaska Elk Management

Project Location: Unit 8 (5,100 mi²)
Kodiak and adjacent islands

Project Objectives:

- Maintain a minimum population of at least 1000 elk for all user groups.
- Maintain harvests within sustainable-yield levels of the elk population.
- Develop population objectives for each major subherd.

Work Accomplished During the Project Segment Period: We were unable to complete aerial sex and age composition surveys in 1998. Incomplete evidence suggested the herd sizes were stable, and we used population data from 1997 to set harvest objectives.

Mandatory permit reports returned by hunters provided statistics on hunting effort and harvest. We issued 1,239 drawing permits and 593 registration permits. Hunters reported harvesting 176 elk (91 males, 85 females). The harvest by permit hunt was as follows: Raspberry Island drawing permit hunt, 10 males, 21 females; southeastern Afognak drawing permit hunt, 28 males, 39 females; southeastern Afognak registration permit hunt, 18 males, 14 females; northern Afognak registration permit hunt, 35 males, 11 females.

We issued 1 emergency order to close a portion of registration hunt RE754 in 1998. The northwest portion of that area, which was occupied by the Waterfall Lake herd, received greater pressure than usual due to increased hunter access from new logging roads.

The total harvest from drawing and registration permit hunts by herd for Afognak Island was as follows: Duck Mountain - 10; Portage Lake - 16; Seal Bay - 5; Marka Lake - 12; Waterfall Lake - 32; Malina Lakes/Afognak Lake - 66; location not specified - 4.

Progress Meeting Project Objectives: The elk population appeared to be stable in 1998. The elk population was estimated at 1,400 animals in 1997, above the 1,000 elk objective. The reported 1998 harvest of 176 elk equaled 13% of the estimated population, equal to the 1997 harvest and an increase over the 10% estimated rate in 1996. During an increasing population trend in the 1980's some herds sustained harvest rates of at least 15%.

Segment Period Project Costs:

	<u>Personnel</u>	<u>Operating</u>	<u>Total</u>
Planned	19.6	6.0	25.6
Actual	19.6	6.0	25.6
Difference	0.0	0.0	0.0

Submitted by: Michael G. McDonald
Assistant Management Coordinator